

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 remain pending in the present application. In the Restriction Requirement of April 13, 2007, restriction was required to either Group I, comprising claim 1, Group II, comprising claims 2-4, or Group III, comprising claims 5 and 6. Applicant has elected Group I (as identified by the Examiner), comprising claim 1. However, the election of Group I (as identified by the Examiner) is made with traverse for at least the following reasons.

The above-identified application is the U.S. National Stage of PCT/JP2003/012507. Accordingly, the unity of invention standard is applicable to the above-identified application.

As set forth in the MPEP 1850 and 1893.03(d), the unity of invention standard is not simply whether one group of claims has a feature which is not in another group. Rather, as described in MPEP section 1850 (II), when an international application relates to more than one invention, the unity of invention standard permits inclusion of all inventions so linked as to form a single general inventive concept, when there is a technical relationship among the inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features. Notwithstanding the above-noted admonitions in the MPEP, the reasoning provided in support of the outstanding Restriction Requirement indicates merely that “[g]roup I has the technical feature of separating the connection between the product and the workpiece, group II has a different technical feature of a punch guide and a punch body, and group III has a different technical feature of a die main body”. That is, the reasoning provided in support of the outstanding Restriction Requirement merely identifies a feature of each group of claims, presumably for the implication that the identified feature is not in one or more claims of another group.

The claims of the present application satisfy the above-described standard for unity of invention. In this regard, claims of the identified groups are directed to one invention or more than one invention so linked as to form a general inventive concept. Further, the claims of the

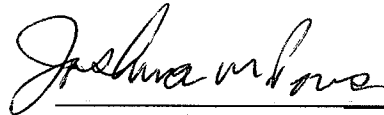
identified groups are directed to one invention or more than one invention having a technical relationship involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features. That is, though one or more claims of each identified group may include a feature which is not in one or more claims of another group, the unity of invention standard is not simply whether one group of claims includes a feature which is not in one or more claims of another group. Accordingly, the identified groups of claims are not properly subject to restriction.

For all these reasons, and consistent with the office policy as set forth in MPEP 1850 and 1893.03(d), Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement as set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action. Nevertheless, in order to be fully responsive, Applicant has elected with traverse Group I (as identified by the Examiner), comprising claim 1.

Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully Submitted,
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